

THE HEALTH LAW, ETHICS AND POLICY SEMINAR SERIES

Presents

Professor Joseph White

Case Western Reserve University

THE PUZZLING POLITICS OF SPENDING CONTROL IN THE CURRENT U.S. HEALTH CARE REFORM DEBATE

POLITICS OF HEALTH CARE COST CONTROL IN THE UNITED STATES



CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

Thursday, November 12 2009

12:30 – 2:00

Faculty of Law, University of Toronto

84 Queen's Park, Falconer Hall

Solarium (Room FA2)

Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C5

(Everyone is welcome to attend)



Abstract

During the current U.S. health care reform conflict, President Obama and many other political leaders have claimed that controlling spending is as fundamental a goal as expanding access to insurance. There are many policy and political reasons why that should be the case. The fear of losing insurance affects far more voters than do not have insurance at any one time, and costs are the major reason for that fear. Both business and government finances are threatened by projected spending increases. Yet the reform debate has had little explicit discussion of cost control options. More precisely, there has been a great deal of promotion of measures that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has said it will not “score” as providing savings. Meanwhile, the politicians who claim to care most about budgetary responsibility (“Blue Dog” Democrats and their allies) object strenuously to measures that CBO has said it could score as providing some spending restraint. And the business community, which should care little about expanding insurance but a lot about controlling costs, is curiously silent. Why would politicians and advocates promote savings which, because of congressional procedures, they will be prevented from saying finances reform? Why is the business community relatively silent about cost control? Why do budget hawks oppose budget restraint? Dr. White will suggest some answers – but they may raise more questions.

Biography

Joe White is Luxenberg Family Professor of Public Policy, Chair of the Department of Political Science, Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and Director of the Center for Policy Studies at Case Western Reserve University. He earned his AB in Political Science from the University of Chicago and his MA and PhD in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley. His research has focused on U.S. federal budget policy and politics, international health care systems, U.S. social insurance programs, and health care cost control. His research on health care policy and politics includes two books: *False Alarm: Why the Greatest Threat to Social Security and Medicare is the Campaign to “Save” Them* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001; paperback with new afterword, 2003), and *Competing Solutions: American Health Care Proposals and International Experience* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1995). Among his articles are “Markets and Medical Care: The United States, 1993-2005.” *The Milbank Quarterly* 85:3 (September 2007), and articles this year with Jon Oberlander or Oberlander and Ted Marmor on health care cost control and the current U.S. health care reform debate in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *Health Affairs*, and *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The Health Law Ethics and Policy Workshop series brings local, national, international scholars and policy makers as guest speakers to the Faculty of Law, University of Toronto to stimulate discussion of issues related to the intersection of law with health care and related ethical and social issues. The workshop series is organized by the **CIHR – Training Program in Health Law, Ethics and Policy** and is sponsored by **Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)** and the **Faculty of Law, University of Toronto**.

For upcoming workshops, refer to the schedule online:

http://www.law.utoronto.ca/visitors_content.asp?itemPath=5/12/8/0/0&contentId=588

For more information, contact: Melissa Casco at m.casco@utoronto.ca